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(ST. LOUIS, MO) – Russ Carnahan (MO-3) will meet with the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs this week to demand improvements at the John Cochran VA Medical Center. Last week, Carnahan called for an independent, top-to-bottom review of the facility in the wake of reports that the facility has cancelled all surgeries after evidence of a possible new sterilization problem.

“Enough is enough. It’s time for a full, independent review of the entire facility to determine why they consistently seem to have problems,”

Carnahan said.

“The VA provides top-of-the-line care at other centers throughout the country. There is absolutely no reason why veterans in the St. Louis region should be asked to settle for substandard care.

We can do better than this.”

Carnahan will meet with VA Secretary Eric Shinseki on Thursday, February 10 to discuss ongoing problems at the Cochran VA Center. Last week, Cochran suspended surgeries after

staff noticed evidence of contamination of surgical instrument trays; earlier this year, nurses who work at the medical center came forward with detailed concerns about access to needed medical supplies, broken equipment, infection control and staffing levels; and in June of last year, Cochran announced that sterilization problems in its dental clinic had potentially exposed over 1,800 veterans to Hepatitis and HIV.

Tonight at 10:00p.m. Central Time, an investigative report on problems at the Cochran facility will air on KSDK-TV (Channel 5).

Last week, Carnahan accepted an assignment on the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, a post he said would help him push for better patient care at the Cochran facility and other VA Medical Centers. In 2010, Carnahan was one of only 20 "exceptional leaders" to earn a perfect A+ rating on veterans' issues from the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America Action Fund.

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